

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above identified application in view of the preceding amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 8-12, and added new Claims 13-19. The claim amendments were made to more precisely define the invention in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 112, paragraph 2. These amendments have not been necessitated by the need to distinguish the present invention from any prior art. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been introduced by these amendments, as support therefor is found throughout the specification and drawings.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,681,349 to Press et al. The Examiner's grounds for rejection are herewith traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The invention of Press et al. relates to a fabrication process for a complex joint arrangement, and assists in preventing blow out of the weld metal. Press et al. show vents 34, 35 that act as safety features by intaking fluid leaked from the pipe. Press et al. are not concerned with pressure balancing. The pipe sections are simply spaced apart and connected by a bellows. There is no microannulus between a liner and pipe sections because the bellows is between flanges rather than inside the pipe sections. Nor does Press disclose radial vents in the bellows.

In contrast, Claim 1 recites a pipe liner connector suitable for use with connected pipe sections having an internal liner, the pipe liner connector comprising a substantially cylindrical sleeve located inside the pipe sections having opposed open ends

for sealed attachment to the internal liner of the connected pipe sections, and the substantially cylindrical sleeve defining one or more vents extending radially through the cylindrical sleeve to provide fluid communication between a micro-annulus, formed between the internal liner and the connected pipe sections, and a bore defined by the connected pipe sections, for balancing a pressure differential between the micro-annulus and the bore. Press et al. does not disclose or suggest such a structural configuration. Accordingly, Claim 1 and each of the claims depending therefrom distinguish the subject invention from Press et al. and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 8-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 3,876,233 to Schmedding et al. The Examiner's grounds for rejection are herewith traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Schmedding et al. disclose a member 16 with narrowing tapered ends. The member 16 is placed with pipe and a wedge member 28 is propelled over the tapered end to create a friction fit to hold the member 16 in place. The wedge member 28 has frangible grooves 32 so that the wedge member 28 breaks apart to limit the compression on the member 16. A ring element 38 seals the wedge member 28 (e.g., blocks any opening that may be left by the grooves 32) so that fluid cannot flow around it.

In contrast, Claim 8 recites a pipe liner connector assembly including pipe sections having an internal liner, and a pipe liner connector including a substantially cylindrical sleeve having opposed first and second open ends, wherein the first open end comprises a first diametrically increased ring section longitudinally displaced from the first open end towards the second open end, said first diametrically increased ring section having one or more venting grooves located on an outer surface thereof and extending

longitudinally thereon for balancing a pressure differential between a micro-annulus formed between the internal liner and the pipe sections on a first side of the ring section and an annular section defined between the pipe liner connector and the pipe sections on a second, opposing side of the ring section by providing fluid communication therebetween. The wedge member of Schmedding et al. is not part of the member 16 as opposed to the increased ring section which is part of the sleeve as recited in Claim 8. Rather, the member 16 only has a narrowing taper. Furthermore, there is no fluid communication across the wedge member as provided by the vents across the increased ring section as recited in Claim 8. Thus, Schmedding et al. does not disclose or suggest such a structural configuration. Accordingly, Claim 8 and each of the claims depending therefrom distinguish the subject invention from Schmedding et al. and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.


Applicant has added new Claims 13-19, which are directed to additional patentable aspects of the subject invention. Applicant respectfully submits that new Claims 13-19 patentably distinguish over the art of record, and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or overpayments due as a result of filing the present paper may be applied to Deposit Account No. 04-1105. It is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now remaining in this application are in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this amendment, the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would facilitate the resolution of any remaining matters the undersigned attorney may be contacted at the number set forth herein below.

Respectfully submitted,

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